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4. Judaism

The history of Judaism in the Old Testament is rich in historical and heroic figures. Abraham, Moses, Naomi, Ruth, David, and Yochann ben Zaccai have done much to build and preserve the Jewish faith. Considering that this religion has lasted approximately 4000 years and has affected multiple nations of various continents, these people could possibly be some of the most important in all of world history.

Historians will often look at people of history and try to compare them with each other trying to find out who has played the largest role in preserving the faith. In your essay, defend or reject the statement “Moses is the most important person in Jewish history of the Old Testament.” Give at least two reasons for your answer.

This essay has six assignments:

Assignment	Due Date		Due Date
1. Prewriting Activities	_____	4. Works Cited	_____
2. Thesis Statement	_____	5. Rough Draft	_____
3. Outline	_____	6. Final	_____

Prewriting Activities for Essay #4

A. Ruth, Naomi, Yochanan ben Zaccai

Students of ancient Hebrews typically will spend much time studying King Solomon, King Saul, King David, Abraham, Sarah, and Moses. However, Ruth, Naomi, and Yochanan ben Zaccai are also important Hebrew figures. Read these brief summaries and answer the questions below.

Ruth and Naomi

Ruth was an ancient Moabite. Moabs were enemies of the ancient Hebrews. Ruth lived in Moab territory and married a Jew. After her husband's death, she converted to Judaism. Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, was living in Moab territory but decided to return to Israel after her son died.

Naomi told Ruth to stay with her people, the Moabs. Ruth replied, "Wherever you go, I will go. Wherever you lodge, I will lodge... Where you die, I will die." (Ruth 1:16) In Jerusalem Naomi arranged for Ruth to marry, and a descendant of Ruth was King David.

Yochanan ben Zaccai

When Romans invaded Jerusalem and began to murder all Jews and destroy the Jewish temple, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zaccai offered surrender to Roman general Vespasian, if the general would grant Zaccai one request. The rabbi said, "Give me Yavneh (a city with a great university), and all its sages (professors, philosophers, and religious leaders). Partly because of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zaccai's actions, many Jews lived through this hard time, and the Jewish faith remained alive up to today.

Questions

1. Who were Ruth and Naomi? Naomi: Jewish mother-in-law of Ruth, a Moab
2. What is the story of these two women? After Ruth's husband died, Naomi went back to live with Hebrews. Ruth followed her, even though Moabs were enemies of Hebrews.
3. What do the actions of Ruth and Naomi tell you about friendship of the ancient Hebrews? For ancient Hebrews, friendship and family were extremely important.
4. How did Rabbi Yochanan ben Zeccai save many Jewish lives, and perhaps save the Jewish faith? He made a deal with General Vespasian to save a Jewish university and professors. The deal worked.
5. What do the actions of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zeccai tell you about the character of the ancient Hebrews? Ancient Hebrews were clever and had forethought in dealing with militarily stronger adversaries.

B. Early Hebrew Leaders

Early Hebrew leaders helped build a faith that has lasted approximately 4,000 years. What was the role of each? Was one leader more important than another? Following the directions of your teacher, research these early Hebrew leaders and decide, from your research, which one played the greatest role in the early Jewish faith.

Early Hebrew Leaders
Importance for Hebrews?
Abraham: <u>God spoke to Abraham first. He told Abraham he would have a son, and commanded him to move to a promised land. Abraham and his wife Sarah had Isaac, who became the beginning of the Jewish people. Abraham led his people to the Promised Land.</u>
Moses: <u>Moses was raised as a prince in ancient Egypt. Moses returned to his people, the Hebrews, and lived as a shepherd. He rescued the Jews out of Egyptian slavery, crossed the Red Sea, and wandered with the Jews for 40 years in the wilderness until reaching the Promised Land. This is called the Exodus.</u>
King David: <u>As a boy, David's faith in God led him to bravely fight and defeat a giant named Goliath. David went on to become a mighty Hebrew king. King David built the city of Jerusalem and made it his capital.</u>
King Saul: <u>Saul was the first ancient Hebrew king. He defeated many enemies in battle. After failing to completely destroy an enemy tribe as God's prophet Samuel had instructed him to, Saul lost God's anointing. Saul committed suicide in a battle he was losing.</u>
King Solomon: <u>King Solomon is the builder of the great Hebrew temple in Jerusalem. Solomon is known for his wisdom to know good and bad. Solomon had great wealth, made many alliances, and ruled a peaceful land. At his death, though, his kingdom split in two. The Old Testament explains that it was Solomon's polygamy and tolerance of paganism that caused his kingdom to split.</u>
Naomi: See previous page.
Ruth: See previous page.
Yochanan ben Zaccai: See previous page.

C. A Brief History of Early Judaism

Research key events in early Jewish history and detail who was most prominent in them. Which Jewish leaders were the most important during these key events?

Key Events for Ancient Hebrews	
Key Event	Who? What?
1. God reveals himself to man	1. <u>God told Abraham to move to Canaan from Ur in about 1900 B.C. Jews, Christians, and Muslims believe Abraham and Sarah to be their ancestors.</u>
2. Exodus: flight from Egypt	2. <u>Moses leads the Hebrews out of their slavery in Egypt and they wander for 40 years in the desert wilderness.</u>
3. God makes a covenant with man	3. <u>God tells the Hebrews through Moses they are God's people. God provides the Hebrews with a set of laws.</u>
4. A Jewish kingdom begins	4. <u>A kingdom was established in the Promised Land under King Saul. King David chooses Jerusalem as the capital.</u>
5. Temple of Jerusalem is built	5. <u>King Solomon makes the Hebrew Kingdom powerful and wealthy. He builds a huge temple at Jerusalem.</u>
6. Romans destroy Jerusalem	6. <u>In A.D. 66, Romans destroy Jerusalem, leaving only the Western Wall of the Temple.</u>
7. Jews disperse to the world (Diaspora)	7. <u>Jews escape Roman persecution by scattering to various parts of the world.</u>

D. Class Discussion

When you share ideas with other students, your ideas may be reinforced, rejected, or slightly changed. Listening to your classmates' ideas will help you form your own judgment.

Each student must interview at least three classmates who do not sit next to one another. The answers to the following questions must be written down on a piece of paper.

1. What is your name?
2. Do you think Moses is the most important person in Jewish history of the Old Testament?
3. What two reasons do you have for thinking this?

Reflection

After you have written down all your classmates' responses, think about them and ask yourself the following questions. Write down your answers under your classmates' responses.

1. What do I think of these classmates' answers?
2. Which are the best answers to question #2 above?
3. Have I changed the way I think?
4. How have I changed the way I think?

You should now have a chance to present your ideas in a class discussion. If somebody says something with which you disagree, speak up! In your discussion, you may find out they are actually right and you are wrong. All possible viewpoints should be stated and defended out loud. Test your ideas in class.

Part Two: Social Studies Literacy Curriculum

Chapter III: Skills for the One-Paragraph Essay

1. Fact or Opinion?

Fact

A **fact** in history is a statement that is accepted as true and is not debatable. A fact often refers to a date, a person, or a document. For example, “The Declaration of Independence was written and signed in 1776.” We know this happened because we have the original document, the men who wrote and signed this document wrote about it, and observers wrote about it as well. There is no doubt in anybody’s mind whether the facts in this statement are true.

Which of these sentences are facts and which are not?

Fact or Not a Fact?

- | | | |
|-----------|----|---|
| <u>NF</u> | 1. | The first Egyptian settlements were near the Euphrates River. |
| <u>F</u> | 2. | Early civilizations often settled near major rivers. |
| <u>F</u> | 3. | Another way of saying Old Stone Age is Paleolithic. |
| <u>NF</u> | 4. | Early man used guns to hunt buffaloes. |
| <u>NF</u> | 5. | California has the best waves to surf in the United States. |

Opinion

An **opinion** is an expression of somebody’s ideas and is debatable. Opinions that are based on facts and good reasoning are stronger than opinions not based on facts. In history, opinions alone tend to be less persuasive than when a person supports his opinions with facts.

Are the following opinions or facts?

Opinion or Fact?

- | | | |
|----------|----|---|
| <u>O</u> | 1. | Life for early man was more peaceful than our life today. |
| <u>O</u> | 2. | Teachers who are nice don’t assign homework. |
| <u>O</u> | 3. | Almost everybody’s favorite food is pizza. |
| <u>F</u> | 4. | Mesopotamia means “the land between two rivers.” |
| <u>F</u> | 5. | Sumerians were the first people to use wheeled vehicles. |

Now that you've learned the difference between fact and opinion, read the example paragraphs below and answer the questions. These two students attempted to answer the question "Did the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia contribute much to world civilizations?"

Student 1: The ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia contributed much to the world. These societies rocked! When there was a really big war, the Sumerians and Assyrians knew how to fight hard. These societies would use a lot of arrows in their battles, and the enemy wouldn't know how to respond. Most of the time, the enemy would just die, or quit. Also, everyone knows that Mesopotamia had the best kind of clothing. Have you seen pictures of the great Babylonian kings? Their clothing was "tight." And, Mesopotamia was the land between two rivers, so therefore this area had to have a lot of water. All in all, the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia contributed much to the world.

Student 2: The ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia contributed much to the world. The Sumerians created the first written language. We call this "Cuneiform." Sumerians also were the first people to use the wheel for transportation. The Babylonian king Hammurabi established one of the first written law codes, known as Hammurabi's Code. These laws helped the weak against the strong, protected women's property rights, and regulated doctors' fees. Also, the Hittites discovered how to use iron, which at that time was the strongest metal in the world that humans could work with. Phoenicians gave us the world's first alphabet, with 22 symbols. In addition, the Hebrews were the first people ever to worship only one God. Yes, the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia contributed much to the world.

Questions

1. Which of these two students uses more opinion than fact? Student 1 uses more opinion than fact.
2. Copy one sentence that is an opinion. Also, everyone knows that Mesopotamia had the best kind of clothing.
3. Copy one sentence that details at least one fact. The Babylonian king Hammurabi established one of the first written law codes, known as Hammurabi's Code.
4. Which of these two students' writings is more persuasive? Why? Student 2 has a more persuasive essay than Student 1 because student 2 uses more facts than opinions for the supporting evidence.

Five-Paragraph Essay Grading Rubric

Grading Scale

4	Exceeds Standards
3	Meets Standards
2	Approaching Standards
1	Below Standards
0	Nonexistent

	Yes/No
Paragraph I.	
A. Thesis: Does it answer the question and provide organizational structure?	_____
B. Interest? Does it grab the interest of the reader?	_____
Score: _____	
Paragraph II.	
A. Topic Sentence: Does it provide a strong statement supporting the thesis?	_____
B. Evidence: 1. Is evidence used to support the topic sentence?	_____
2. Is the evidence explained clearly and in detail?	_____
C. Closer: Does the closer convincingly link the paragraph's evidence with the topic sentence?	_____
Score: _____	
Paragraph III.	
A. Topic Sentence: Does it provide a strong statement supporting the thesis?	_____
B. Evidence: 1. Is evidence used to support the topic sentence?	_____
2. Is the evidence explained clearly and in detail?	_____
C. Closer: Does the closer convincingly link the paragraph's evidence with the topic sentence?	_____
Score: _____	
Paragraph IV.	
A. Topic Sentence: Does it provide a strong statement supporting the thesis?	_____
B. Evidence: 1. Is evidence used to support the topic sentence?	_____
2. Is the evidence explained clearly and in detail?	_____
C. Closer: Does the closer convincingly link the evidence with the topic sentence?	_____
Score: _____	
Paragraph V.	
A. Restating Topic Sentences: Are the topic sentences in II, III, IV restated?	_____
B. Closer: Does the Closer persuasively show that the main ideas of paragraphs II, III, and IV strongly support the thesis?	_____
Score: _____ X 5 = _____	
Spelling or Grammatical Errors	- _____
Missing Prewriting Work	- _____
Total Score	_____

Multi-Page Research Essay Grading Rubric

Grading Scale

4	Exceeds Standards
3	Meets Standards
2	Approaching Standards
1	Below Standards
0	Nonexistent

I	Organization/Structure of the Essay	Yes/No
A. Thesis:	Does the thesis take a firm position on the essay topic?	_____
B. Topic Sentences:	Do topic sentences strongly support the thesis?	_____
C. Conclusion:	Does the conclusion persuasively affirm the thesis?	_____
	Score: _____	
II	Evidence: Part I: Accuracy and Adequacy of Evidence	
A. Accuracy:	Is all evidence accurate (true)?	_____
B. Adequacy:	Is enough evidence used?	_____
	Score: _____	
III	Evidence: Part II: Validity and Persuasiveness of Evidence	
B. Validity:	Do explanations of evidence make sense?	_____
A. Persuasiveness:	Do explanations of evidence support main ideas?	_____
	Score: _____	
IV	Language Mechanics	
A. Punctuation:	Does the essay use correct punctuation?	_____
B. Grammar:	Does the essay use correct grammar (sentence structure)?	_____
C. Spelling:	Is spelling correct?	_____
	Score: _____	
V	Writing Process	
A. Prewriting Activities:	Are all prewriting activities complete?	_____
B. Effort:	Is great effort shown in these activities?	_____
	Score: _____	
	Total Score: _____ X 5 = Grade: _____	